

## News Release

# Seven Mini-grants Awarded in December as part of Partnership Connecting Children and Nature; Second round of grants to be considered in February

By Itollefs on Thursday, January 6, 2011

Seven projects have been supported through the awarding of \$500 mini-grants from a unique working partnership focused on connecting children and nature. The mini-grant project goals are to connect children with nature, get children outdoors, develop community support for unstructured outdoor activities, provide multiyear benefits for encouraging a personal experience in outdoor places, help remove barriers to outdoor activities, such as access issues, safety concerns, and negativity of natural play or other concerns.

The partnership, which includes the University of Minnesota Crookston; University of Minnesota Extension; Northwest Regional Development Commission; Northwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership; International Water Institute River Watch; Polk and Mahnomen Public Health Programs; and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, awarded the grants in December and is looking to fund a second round in February 2011. Applications are encouraged.



The mini-grant opportunities are available to any school, club, group, community, or non-profit organization directly involved with educating or caring for children located in Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau, and Wilkin counties. To be considered for the next round of funding applications must be received by February 1, 2011. For more information or to access the application form, visit the U of M Crookston website.

The seven projects receiving funding in December included several projects in the Crookston community: The Northwest Mental Health Center's summer program gardens will encourage children in grades K-6 to participate in gardens at 12 school sites tying nutritional benefits to working with nature in a garden. The School Age Care's school garden project will help support learning during the summer program using the garden at Washington School. Little Villagers Child Care at the Villa St. Vincent will use their grant to provide children with outdoor program supplies including a toboggans, composter, bug nets, and shovels, etc. Highland Elementary School will purchase digital cameras to be used for the sixth grade's annual field trip to Itasca and for a winter survival unit at the U of M Crookston's Nature Center.

The Ada- Borup Elementary School will use their funding to purchase digital cameras for their after-school science enrichment program for grades 3-6. In Newfolden, Minn., Marshall County Central's mini grant award will help defray transportation costs for a field trip to Wolf Ridge for a field-based science learning experience, and Marshall County's McCrea 4-H Club will use funds to learn about native fish in Minnesota through an ice fishing trip to Lake of the Woods.

Today the University of Minnesota Crookston delivers 29 bachelor's degree programs, 18 minors, and more than 40 concentrations, including several online degrees, in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of about 1,400 undergraduates from more than 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit [www.umcrookston.edu](http://www.umcrookston.edu).

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